

**20  
DARK,  
SCARY,  
AND SAD  
SHORT  
STORIES**

**BY A.A WRAY**

**20 DARK, SCARY AND SAD SHORT STORIES**

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**PUBLISHED AT SMASHED WORDS**

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## **DANCING QUEEN**

*"You can dance.."*

My wife had sang those words as she danced with our seven year old daughter in the kitchen as they cooked.

*"You can jive. Having the time of your life..."*

*"Oooo!"* My daughter sang happily as they jigged and popped to their favourite Abba song.

*"See that girl,"* My wife sang, twirling my daughter around and she giggled. *"Watch that scene... digging the dancing-"*

She never got to finish that song. She grabbed her heart, stumbling back against the counter. The cut up vegetables fell to the ground as she dropped down too... her face turning purple.

I had ran to call the ambulance. I had tried everything.

But she was gone.

X

Months felt like years, as the next few of them past. I took my daughter to bed each night, barely any life on my face... any joy.

But I had to keep strong for my daughter.

As I sat on the armchair in the dark living room, only light from the TV screen lighting my face and leaving shadows everywhere else... I heard her singing.

*"You... can... dance..."*

I sighed, was my daughter still awake?

I got off the armchair and began to walk to her door, knocking on it gently before coming in.

*"You... can jive..."*

I looked over at her with a cross stare, but she still had her eyes closed and instead was singing in her sleep.

My eyes fell opened a little, and I sighed. Saddened hearing that song imprinted on her brain.

I pulled over a chair, and just listened to her sing the rest of the chorus before she whispered, still asleep.

"Hello, Jerry..."

I froze, my daughter's body was pretty dead in sleep... but she was talking to me as if she were awake. But something was different about her voice.

It had a playful maturity about it and I listened, not speaking as she continued.

"Did you like mine and Sally's song?"

I stiffened up even tighter. The way she was talking, sounded almost like her mother's inflection. But that's not why I was getting scared... it was because Sally, my daughter... was using her name in third person... not first.

"Maggie...?" I asked, my wife's name falling from my lips.

"I've missed you, Jerry..." Maggie said through my daughter's words and I swallowed. But I didn't wake her up.

I just started to cry, I missed my wife... so much.

X

I came into my daughter's room every night, to talk to *her*.

Me and Maggie would talk for hours, just talking of memories and of years past... our times of happiness and joy. We never mentioned the death.

I didn't want to know how she was speaking through our daughter. I was just happy.

Finally one day, I needed more.

I started giving Sally sleeping tablets so she'd sleep for twelve hours instead of just eight. I knew it was selfish... but I missed my wife, my partner in life... my soulmate.

"Jerry... remember when she was born...?"

"Yes..." I said, as Maggie was indicating our daughter.

"It was the second happiest day of my life. The first being the day I met you."

"It's weird..." Maggie continued, and I listened to her confused, her voice sounding so childlike coming out of Sally's mouth. "All I see is darkness... and all I hear is your voice... calling me."

"You spoke f-first..." I said in tears and Sally just sighed, turning over on her side and Maggie continued through her lips.

"There's nothing around me... just black... I can't even hear other deceased souls... I'm just alone. P-please don't leave me, Jerry..."

"I won't." I promised, knowing I would keep my daughter in this house forever if I could. I had to cry out the words.

"But you... left first."

"Daddy...?"

Sally had woken up and was looking at me, sleepily. I stared at her, afraid of what I would say and she only yawned, adding.

"Keeping the ghosts away for me?"

"T-that's it honey..." I said the words in a lie, and tucked her back in, almost desperate. "Now go to sleep."

"But I'm-"

"Go. To. SLEEP." I said, my voice dangerous and Sally only looked at me, afraid.

She lay back in a shiver on her bed, and I just watched her close her eyes and whimper...

It wasn't soon later that she had gone back to sand land... and I heard my wife say out from her voice.

"Thank you... I don't like the d-darkness..."

I smiled, tears coming down my eyes and she began to sing to soothe me.

*"You can dance, you can jive... h-having the time of your life."*

I listened, and just fell my head in my hands, hating myself so.

*"See that girl, watch that scene. Digging... the dancing... q-queen..."*

## **BROTHERS THROUGH TIME**

I didn't know how to feel. Mostly because I couldn't. All feelings had become numb in the moment, as I looked at the grave stone.

I was with my brother and he placed his hand on my shoulder, as he whispered in soft true words.

"Hey, it's okay..."

I could feel tears running down my cheeks, my feelings becoming nothing but pain... my chest burning up in agony at how much I didn't want to feel. But I did... and I couldn't stop.

He stood beside me as I cried over the man that had died four hundred years ago... and how I knew no other pain than what I knew he must've experienced.

In that time.

In that place.

"Please don't go back..." I whispered to my brother... "Just keep going forward... don't go back."

"I have to." he said to me, and his words were so strong in their conviction and love. "Or else we don't have a now..."

"But... but you'll be k-killed." I spluttered out and he just chuckled a weak laugh. He looked slowly over to the name inscribed on the grave stone and saw it say one of such familiarity.

His...

*Peter Jules O Conner.*

"That's the thing about time travel, Rick." he said in pain that he had to acknowledge the fact. "If it happens in the past... it's already happened."

"But we don't have to travel anymore!" I begged him, begging the only thing I could do. My brother had always been noble. He was going to go back to that time. He had gone back to that time.

There was no way I could persuade an event that was going to happen... that *had* happened... from not being recorded down in the history of time.

"I have too, Rick" he said. And his decision was as simply as that.

I swallowed, wiping my face as I looked at the age on the tombstone and saw it say, *thirty-five*.

He was only twenty-six, and I was his younger brother of twenty-two.

"But I helped make history." he said with a small smile, and I glared an upset look at him not happy with what he said.

"We should have never invented that time machine."

"Please don't worry..." he said as he helped me up on my feet and we began to walk away from his future grave. "Didn't you always say it'd suck to grow old?"

"Y-yeah..." I muttered, trying to be strong for the both of us but I found it so hard. I couldn't understand how my brother could take his death so light heartedly. It was tormenting me to know.

But as we left the grave yard there was another tomb stone that we had never seen... covered in grass with mould etched into it's writing.

*Rick Alfred O Conner.*

*Died at age, 24.*

## **BANSHEE**

My mother always used to warn me about the banshee. I believed now it was just a myth the Irish had spread for years.

When the banshee lady shrieked, the closest person to her was always going to die.

I was scared of the story when I was a child, but I had grown over those petty fears as I grew up.

I didn't understand why my mother wanted to scar me with the story of how her mother died.

"I heard it," she told me when I was twelve. "I heard it scream a shrilling shriek across the farm."

"I looked for my mother," she continued in tears, "Afraid she would come and get me... and then... I saw her. My mum. Hanging with her skin peeled off in the barn. Bleeding. A wire wrapped around her neck as she hung."

I would literally be petrified, not able to sleep at night at the terror stories, and my mum just whispered to me after it. Warning me with her words.

"If you ever hear that scream, run."

To this day, I now realised how stupid my mum had been. It was obviously a serial killer that had slashed my grandma to bits... a sick twisted mind.

My mother must've been just as sick if she blamed some phantom woman for being the cause of it.

Still, I never liked thinking about it. It gave me the chills no matter what. The imprinting of the fear still borne on me since my years as a child.

I had to go visit my mum soon, her house being in the countryside and I got in the car, starting it up.

I drove quietly down the narrow roads to her isolated dwelling, dad having died years ago. I got out of the car and knocked on the door.

My mother answered it in a second and pulled me in as she cried.

"IT'S BACK!"

"What is?" I asked, confused and she yelled in tears.

"The banshee! It killed O' Hara down the road."

I rolled my eyes at her words. I wished she'd stop feeding into the urban legend.

"Mum, please. Be rational..."

"Please... *she's come back to kill me too!*" my mum pleaded with me, as she grabbed my hand and tried to pull me out to the car. "We have to get away from here!"

"Mum, I just drove an hour to get here. I'm not leaving."

My mother only cried helpless tears as she looked at me in panic. She swallowed as she got in her car and left me a couple minutes later. I watched her go, astonished, and just turned going back into the house. I'd stay here for the night and prove to her that there was nothing here.

I sat in the living room that night, the fire crackling and the blackness of outside hiding all that was around in shadows.

As I sat there, I rang my mum to talk her down from her hysteria and back to the house.

When the phone picked up all I heard was a hallowing scream.

"Mum?!" I said in panic, standing up and quickly rang again. All of a sudden I could hear her ring tone going off in the next room. She had left her phone here.

I froze... the ring tone chiming away in the distance... till I heard another sound.

Heavy breathing.

My body became still.

I turned...

...and saw red eyes looking at me.

## **DON'T EAT THE SEEDS**

Allison had told Brady not to eat the seeds of the orange... but did he listen to her? No.

"I'm telling you, Brady." She told him as he crunched and swallowed the seeds down with the rest of the juicy inside of the orange fruits, "You keep eating the seeds, and one day an orange tree will grow out of you."

"As if!" Brady said back with a harsh laugh. Allison looked at him warily... she did not want to see that boy turn into a tree.

The two of them were only ten, Allison new to the street. The other kids heeded her warning, Brady was just being stupid.

"Where do you think that orange you're eating came from, Brady?" Allison told him as he gobbled down another slice. "From a foolish kid just like you who is now a tree."

"No!" Brady yelled back defiantly and Judy only rolled her eyes, giving up.

It wasn't until that night that Brady heard a rumble in his stomach. He ran to the bathroom to puke but all that shot out of his mouth was leaves.

"HUH?!" He coughed, baffled. He *was* turning into a tree! He needed Allison's help. He ran out of his house to Allison's down the street... feeling branches shooting from his fingers and causing him agonising grief.

As he ran towards Allison's house, he saw her just swinging on a tire on a tree in the front. Smiling to herself in the night.

"Allison!" He beckoned. She blinked up, grinning at him as he fell before her and begged.

"You were right! You were r-right! Help me! I don't want to be a tree!"

"It's your own fault..." Allison just told him straight out. He looked at her astonished at that reply. She got off the wheel and waved for him to follow as she continued. "But I know how to fix it. Follow me."

He ran after her, coughing out leaves the whole time till he saw the orange tree in the back where he had snuck an orange one time. He saw a dug up pit and he found it so hard as he felt roots coming out of his toes.

"Over here." Allison said, waving him to the pit and he ran over. Suddenly she pushed him into the hole and he looked at her shocked, zap running down his cheeks in replacement of tears.

"Why'd you do that?!"

"Bad little children deserve a grave like yours."

He looked at her in horror but it was too late. The roots from his toes suddenly clawed out of his shoes and dug into the ground.

He felt his body tear apart as the tree shot out into the air and spread its leaves and fruit.

Allison grinned, picking up a stick from the ground. She waved it around her and in a second turned back into her adult form.

A witch.

The next day her in her ten year old disguise, called the children of the street over to taste the new fruit of the tree she had in her backyard.

As the kids broke open the oranges, they saw it was red inside and urked at the sight.

"It's blood!" they screamed and she reassured them.

"No. Just blood oranges. A kind of fruit. Try it and see."

They tasted it warily, but loved the taste and grinned with red juice all over their teeth. "Mmm! Delicious!"

Blood oranges. Now you know the truth.

## **DON'T WHISPER**

"Don't whisper"

I woke, struggling to breathe. I was in my bed, but it felt like a coffin with how still I was and would remain, in my struggle to get loose.

There were hands around my mouth, holding my breath in and I tried to scream but my voice couldn't break through the decaying skin.

I was in a fiery room, the walls painted in dark red blood. It dripped down the walls, making puddles that reflected the burning shimmering flames.

I could feel my arms and legs were being yanked down to the bed as well, the chains of my body being more decaying hands and I screamed and screamed with little sound.

I could see a figure in the dark, approaching me.

Horns... black eyes... the essence of pure evil.

I was terrified.

I muffled out more noises as I could see the creature approach me, and his face glinting in the fiery light.

"Hello..." he said to me and I screamed and screamed, the hands cupping my mouth and taking away my sound.

"Don't whisper." the creature said to me, his eyes dark... soulless... and I could see black broken wings like a dragon's on his back. They were made from dried up skin, the place I was in silent, beside the crackles of the fires and my breathing through my stuffy nose.

"Don't make a sound." He said back to me, a sharp evil grin showing on his dry lips and he took one of his raven black hands, touching my stomach with his claw like finger nail and stuffing out a cruel cackle.

"mrph!" I shouted, the hands clasping around my mouth tighter and he knew the word I was trying to get out. *You*.

"I thought you didn't believe in me?" He asked, a sinister grin on his lips. "I thought you didn't believe...?"

He bent over on me, and a snake like tongue came out of his mouth as he hissed in my face, licking me and tasting my very flesh.

"So don't say a word. Because its too late."

He flipped my stone bed over and I froze stiff, looking with wide eyes at all the burning souls that were underneath me. All screaming in anguish and I yelled louder but I couldn't make a sound.

"It feels good... doesn't it?"

I didn't understand what he meant but he continued, grinning.

"It always feels good for me when I get one of you."

I swallowed, terrified and I just watched the shrieking souls yell out to me in their burning lava and flames.

I turned to face him one more time before I felt all the hands let go of me.

I dropped.

I dropped through the flaming sky and before I hit the lava-

I woke.

I was in my bed, panting heavily as I shot up and felt a terrible pain in my chest, like my heart was on fire.

Dawn was just reaching and I saw the light of day shine through my far away window. It lay its light across my floor, as I lay there in the shadows.

And I swore I saw the shadow of the creature with the horns in the light scamper away when it hit him.

I ran to my curtains and tore them open, letting light blast through and get rid of all the darkness... before I fell to the ground in tears, crying in agony.

The room was left in light and I whispered to myself.

"Please don't let him take me..."

I had never asked the light that before, believing no one would hear, but I never wanted to see that

creature again and whimpered, pulling my legs to me, and whispering in tears.

"Please... don't let me go."

## **HIM**

He was so perfect. So kind and funny. I loved the things he said. He always made me laugh.

Whenever I got home he was always there for me, whenever I was alone in a crowded room, he'd always come to my rescue.

I felt protected by him. That he'd never hurt me. I don't think he knew how. I'd spend late night's up just listening to his plans and ideas. I hated every second I wasn't with him.

The house was always so lonely when he wasn't around. I felt my heart quake and my body feel empty of emotion.

He made me feel, made me believe the world was a good place. There was no one else like him.

I got jealous whenever other girls talked about him with lovey dove eyes. He was mine... but I could never make him claim me back.

It hurt me how he was so perfect, and whenever someone was introduced to him they'd fall for him too.

Everyone would talk about how they saw him as unique in their eyes, but only I knew the real him.

I was getting more and more hesitant the more I got to know him, as our time was soon coming to an end and I didn't want that. I wanted him to stay forever the way he was. New, exciting.

But then reality finally had to set in after five years.

He was just a fictional character.

I was on the last book.

And the author had just died.

## **I MISS YOU, MOTHER**

The rain was pouring down hard that day, when Jean came to visit her friend. She knocked on the door of the country side cottage and waited a few minutes before it was answered.

Daniella answered it and looked very worried. Her eyes had bags under them and her hair was a mess.

"Oh, Danniella..." Jean said to her, with sadness.  
"I'm so sorry for what's happened."

Daniella nodded her head and led her in, the Labrador dogs running past Jean as she came to the living room.

Daniella made tea and sat down a few minutes later, a little distance from her friend, on the armchair away.

"So no one has seen your mother for how many days?"

"Five..." Daniella said, worriedly. She took a sip of her tea, the big dogs running over to their dish bowls and scuffing down the minced meat.

"You must be freaking out... I know her dementia has been getting worse."

"Yes..." Daniella just whimpered, wiping her tears. Jean took another sip of her tea and said again.

"I'm sure they'll find her, they must..."

"Hopefully..." Daniella replied, and looked into Jean's eyes, as she said back in quiet words. "But in this weather, with her illness... I'm fearing the worse."

"It must be scary... living at home for the first time without your mother to look after..."

"It is." Daniella said back in hushed words. Her voice was chilled at what Jean could only imagine was the thought. "Sometimes I feel like she's still here, wandering around the house... but I think I'm just getting paranoid."

"Don't say that, Daniella." Jean warned her quickly, wanting to help ease her suffering and increase her hope. "She'll be found, she will..."

"We can only wait and see..." her friend said back quietly, looking at the dogs eat and Jean looked down to the two big dogs too.

They were really enjoying their meal. She had never seen dogs go at common meat like that before and she looked hesitantly at Daniella, afraid to ask.

"Hey, Daniella...?"

"Hmm?" her friend hummed back sadly, and took another sip of her tea. Jean cleared her throat... thinking this off topic subject shouldn't be brought up, but she was curious to know.

"What dog food are you feeding those two? My dog has been so fussy lately..."

"Oh, just some mints from the local butchers..."

"Oh, okay..." Jean said with a quick nervous smile and turned her eyes swiftly back at the dogs, seeing the two fighting over what looked like a doggy chew stick.

She looked closer at the sweet and saw -in that second- it had a nail.

And a ring on it.

And human... skin

A finger...

She froze... looking back at Daniella who was still slowly drinking her tea... no expression on her face, before saying.

"The dogs were always fond of mother..."

She lifted her cup back up to her lips and took a sip, one of the Labradors eating down the finger.

## **ONE TRUE LOVE**

I knew he didn't love me anymore... I could see it in his eyes.

They were in love with her... his mistress.

He didn't know that I knew, I didn't want to tell him I knew the truth. But he could never lie well.

"What are you thinking about?" I asked him, as he sat on the lounge and his eyes were smiling with the thought of her.

"No one..."

"No one?" I said, my voice hurting at the words. I had caught him, I was always catching him and he quickly broke out of his thought and said in an instant.

"I mean n-nothing!"

I didn't reply. My heart hurt. I didn't know how to face the fact that he didn't love me anymore... but a woman he had met online.

Yes, I had known about the emails. I knew he had been on a dating site, he was so easy to read, it wasn't funny.

I wished he would just end it with me, and then I could tell him the truth. Tell him how much it hurt... how much I was in pain at the splitting heart.

I read his emails that he sent her without him knowing. They were so beautiful and passionate, so full of a love he had long withdrawn from me. I didn't understand? Was it because her photo was beautiful? Was it because outer beauty automatically equalled inner?

I was once beautiful in his eyes, but as we grew older... and I was not able to bear children... his dream of a family had started to fade with me.

And wander on to newer horizons.

On to more truer beauty. That of a woman that bared her soul to him.

I looked in the mirror, looked at my wrinkles and ageing body. As he became more rugged, I became more worn.

But my heart still beat only for him!

I felt I knew him better after reading his emails... that I loved him more. But he would never show me the love back.

I had to tell him I knew... I couldn't keep it in forever.

But the truth was... I needed too.

Until the day when he would go to her.

I knew they hadn't met yet. But he seemed to fall more and more in love with her and I knew it would be soon.

Then one day I saw the message he sent her.

*"I must be with you. I can't be with her any longer. Please, we must meet! I know you are the only one for me now."*

I cried as I read that email and I typed as a response, my heart torn and destroyed.

Yet loving him ever more.

*"One day, my love. My one true love. You and I meant to be... but I cannot break up your marriage. She is the one you loved first. She made*

*a vow to love you forever... and you made one to her."*

As soon as I sent that message he responded back in five minutes time- me hearing him typing on his laptop in haste in the living room.

*"I wished I had met you first."*

I whispered to myself, the girl he loved being me... me alone and he would never see.

"You did."



## **THE GIRL OF MY NIGHTMARES**

In the dream, I could hear the woman screaming out my name.

"STOP! STOP! YOU WON'T GET RID OF ME! YOU WON'T!"

I screamed as I tried to hurry away from her, her red hair flaming around her as she tried to claw up my body.

"This BODY IS MINE! GIVE IT TO ME!"

I was terrified, my long black hair being pulled back as she tried to kill me in my dream.

"Leave me alone!" I yelled, "GO TO HELL! GO TO HELL LIKE YOU DESERVE!"

She shrieked in pain as I desperately kicked her in the face. I ran away from her as she fell into the darkness, her red hair the only thing I could see as I ran and ran.

I woke up in a fright, lightning from the storm outside flashing in the room. A split second later it was darkness again. I cried and cried... my tears

soaking my nightgown and I got up in shaky steps, going to the mirror.

I had had that dream every night for the last six months. Though in it, the scary red haired woman was becoming less and less able to hurt me... and tonight I had been able to fight her off faster... though I wish these dreams would just end already.

As I looked into the mirror I saw a black single hair in amongst the red that hung down around my shoulders and I sighed.

I pulled it out and looked into the reflection of the green eyes of the girl who's body I had stolen six months ago.

"Don't want people thinking it odd if I start growing black hair instead of red now... hmm?"

I could only see the soul that was trapped in my new body, scream a silent one through the eyes that were now mine.

"Don't worry..." I whispered to her, with a small smile. "We won't always have to share..."



## THE PAINTING

Susanne knew there was something different about his eyes.

The minute she painted them they seemed to have a life of their own. The canvas stood up in her studio as she practiced away on her latest work of art. She was excited about this painting, she believed it might just be the one that defined her.

Her masterpiece.

She left it for the day and headed to bed that night. Though the whole time she was trying to sleep all she could hear was a voice whisper in her head.

*"I need you... I need you."*

She didn't understand. She thought it was just sleep deprivation and nothing else. She had always suffered from sleepless nights.

The next day she continued on with the painting. She painted his lips and chin, a soft smile on his mouth and she smiled back. She continued, touching up his clothes and making the fabric look

more real. He really was such a handsome man, sigh, if only he were real.

That night when she lay in bed she swore she heard the voice scream this time.

"I NEED YOU! I *NEED YOU!*"

And a scraping at her door.

She woke up in her bed the minute her eyes started to drift and looked around frantically for what had frightened her so. There was nothing there.

The last day her eyes were so dreary... her sleep had not been good the last two nights but hopefully with the finishing of this picture she would finally have her accomplishment and be able to sleep easy.

She added a little bit more texture to his dark blue eyes, his brown wavy hair just tussled a little over his forehead.

He was beautiful.

She was nearly done... just one more stroke. She placed the brush on his pupil and dabbed the

black gently on it, his eyes shining now and she smiled.

"Beautiful..." she whispered to herself. She had done a good job. Everything seemed to go so quiet then as she admired her fine work. He looked so real... so unreal in his beauty and she blinked her eyes gently, before opening them weakly back up.

But when she did... she was certain the painting looked different. Like he had changed position slightly.

She drew close, expecting it to see what had changed and as she looked at him slowly-

He blinked.

She shrieked.

He suddenly ripped out of the painting, grabbing her and pulling her in- She screamed as she tried to tear away, her cries of terror echoing around the room as he yelled back.

**"I NEED YOU! I NEED YOU!"**

She cried in agony as she was ripped into the painting, before it dropped to the ground and snapped in half.

Red blood began to spill out from it into a puddle on the ground. It drenched the original picture so that the beautiful painting of the man was destroyed.

The studio remained silent after that. The blood stopped dripping out. No one saw Susanne again.



## THE RISING SUN

Watching the dawn come after the long darkness was a gift from God.

I lay in the sand, the city blowing golden particles into the wind. I slowly began to sit up, the sand falling off me as I stabled myself and watched my beautiful city come back into light after the long ignominious night. I coughed out some of the dirt that had gotten in my mouth over the night, and looked down at my pale skin.

It had turned greyish and mutated. I looked up and saw the orange sun shine its light down across all the land. As it vanquished the shadows, I saw skeletons lay all around. Some leant up against buildings... others still had rotten flesh on them... similar to how mine had been slowly turning from brown to grey.

I swallowed, thirsty. I wanted to sit up, but my legs were not working. They too had been destroyed when that giant ball of light had spread all around us and left us with nothing but the remains of dust and darkness.

The sky had become so cloudy the following days after it, that no light had been able to shine through them, the black ashy clouds not allowing anything to break through.

I covered my dry mouth as I coughed, and just saw red blood was sprinkled on my hand after it.

I looked around for any sign of anyone that could help. All that surrounded me was a desert and dusty decaying buildings.

I took a few deep breaths, in and out. I needed someone to be with me on the day that I would die... someone to sit with me and suffer my agony so I could feel I wasn't all alone.

But the truth was... I was...

I was the last one alive on the earth. I had stayed in that bunker but it didn't protect me... instead it had just been blown away like everything else.

And all I had now was myself.

The last person on earth... how now, did I realise just how terrible the thought was...

considering I was not going to survive for much longer.

A nuclear bomb had hit us, nuclear bombs had collided into all the countries around the world... wiping man off the face of the earth in only five days.

Now I was the sole survivor of what once was the human race. And I could not run the race for much longer as I felt my consciousness sway, my body feeling weak.

I lay back down on the hot sand, and looked up to the now red hellish cloudy sky. I choked out a laugh. A weak feeble laugh as I found it all so funny. All so amusing that I had survived out of everyone else.

I was the one that pushed the button first.



## **THE TALE ON THE SUB**

The underground train screeched its wheels as it continued on in its travels.

I was sitting by myself on a seat, it had been a long trip that day. The time was eleven forty-five at night.

I saw a man hurry off the sub as he got to his stop and I spotted a book he had left behind.

"Er sir- wait!" I called for him, picking it up- but the doors had shut and the train continued on.

"Urgh..." I said, defeated. Even when I tried to be a good civilian, my efforts still always fell flat. I looked at the cover of his book and saw the title say.

*A Life*

"Interesting name," I said to myself, a little curious to see what was inside its pages. I opened it up and read the first page... but it honestly bored me. I skimmed the pages a little, till I eventually decided to skip to the last chapter.

I had already read the beginning so I might as well read the end.

*She sat there, waiting. She had had a hard day and she knew it was coming to an end soon. But what end... that was the question.*

"Ooo!" I squealed to myself, finally getting intrigued and I added as I continued to read, "This is getting interesting."

*She hadn't noticed the man that had been standing away from her the whole time. That the two of them were alone. She never noticed how he wanted to see if she would look down to his hand, the blade being concealed just in his sleeve. His red beard is what should've caught her eye, but didn't. She had always been a fool. Too kind and oblivious to notice the subtle cues around her.*

*Suddenly she was jerked forward.*

I became distracted as the train jeered a bit, and I dropped the book to the ground. I picked it up quickly and continued reading annoyed.

*She was so stupid! He had moved to the seat opposite her and was smiling now, cruelly. He knew the tunnel was coming soon... he was preparing to cut the lights.*

I huffed out a bit of air, a little bored. *Seriously*, I thought, looking up to the man opposite me as if to show my exasperation with this trite plot, and he just gave a nervous smile. I smiled back and decided I might as well finish the book now, there was only two pages left.

*The man had grown nervous... she had noticed him... but hopefully she wouldn't have time to run. He got up and went down to battery box, beginning to cut the lights.*

*Sarah Callagan deserved to die. Her ignorance was about to pay.*

I stiffened when I read the girl's name.

My name... was Sarah Callagan.

I looked up to see the man had disappeared and I began to panic. I quickly read the words on the

next and final page, the next stop still not another twenty minutes away.

*He had nearly finished cutting the last wire. He loved doing it in the dark. It gave him a thrill. Just one wire left and then.*

"And THEN?!" I screamed, my eyes dashing back and forth as I could not see anyone, I read the last line.

*To be continued...*

The lights switched off.



## **THE WEEPING GUITAR**

I played the guitar quietly to myself. I never told anyone that I could play it well these days. I didn't want to share the secret after the surgery. There were a lot of things I could do a lot better these days than I couldn't before in the past... and it scared me to no ends.

I remembered when I was assigned to the front. I was scared. I had only been in the army for three years when I was sent into the war zone. I was too young. I was glad to be serving my country, but I just didn't think my time as a soldier would end so soon and with such a bloody conclusion.

It had been a day of non stop guns and explosions. I hid behind the barracks with my comrades, as we screamed over each other's voices to get the orders through and to be prepared to die brave men if we had to.

I was told to run with all my might the second I was handed something. To take it and throw it away into the distance.

But I was too late. And it exploded.

I remember the hospital... I remember the excruciating pain I had been in, no one expecting me to have survived the blast but I had... with two exceptions.

I remembered waking up, and looking down to my arms... to my hands... only to see... they were not the same as I remembered.

The memories played further back to me as I remembered seeing one of my comrades, Sean, playing the guitar... I had gotten close to him on the war zone.

"I want to be a famous musician, one day..." he said to me with a soft smile and I smiled back.

"You will..." I replied, warmth in my eyes, at his hopes and dreams... mine had only been to serve. He wanted to go to university.

I remember seeing him seconds before I had been handed the bomb... being shot repeatedly, to death. My eyes had been widened to the very true horrors of the world. I didn't want the other men to

suffer his fate so I had agreed to get rid of the deadly explosion.

I remember the doctors telling me they had found a match as I lay in the hospital... the man had been on the donar list. But it had to be fast, the body parts wouldn't last for long.

And here I was two years later, playing guitar in my room. I didn't tell anyone I could play it... that I could suddenly draw really well and that my writing was no longer the same.

I remained silent... always afraid of what my decision had been at the hospital.

I strummed the instrument slowly as I played it, with Sean's fingers making the notes come off the strings in soft warm rhythms.

As his hands played the melody for me in perfect cohesion.

## **THE WIND**

The wind was blowing hard that day.

I stood outside underneath the veranda of our farm house, just watching the leaves bustle in the torrent of the breeze.

I could hear them rustling like rattle snakes, up on the trees and I looked up quietly to them. The green and brown fluttered back and forth in this dry weather.

But the wind had given a cool blowing breeze in my long red hair. I blinked my eyes slowly, getting prepared.

I took a few more steps away from the house, coming closer to the demanding gusts, and watched as houses got torn up. I could see their wood flying into pieces, making a circular drilling cage for the swirling torrent that I had never been so close to before.

I could hear the cattle and the sheep bleating and mooing, as they began to herd and flock away from the wind. My green eyes just watched the

poor creatures get swept up. I could hear my father's cry.

"Catherine! Get in here now!"

I turned around, and could see him with my mother and brother, in the bunker and I just smiled.

I dared him to come out and get me... but he wasn't that brave. No, my eyes were just mystified on the spiraling wind that came closer and closer... tearing up the ground and trees as it made its journey to its destination.

Me.

I swallowed and stepped a little closer to it, my mother crying out to me, in tears.

"Catherine! Please!"

I could hear their shouts, but it wasn't going to stop me. I was going to face that storm... face that breeze.

As the tornado began to approach all I could hear was infant crying.

I ignored it and stepped closer to my doom...  
our doom.

I had never liked my parents... taking me away  
from my boyfriend, making me give up the baby...

They should pay the price.

I walked a little forward in a bit of a harder  
struggle, as there was something in my hands  
trying to escape.

The infant cries soon became infant screams,  
screeching in my ears and I would cover them if I  
could, but my hands were busy carrying  
something.

Carrying... someone.

My baby sister was screaming in my arms, only  
just turning one and I could hear my mother's  
screams and yells of horror soaked in tears as I  
stepped closer and closer to the spiraling tornado,  
taking my little sister with me.

She had red hair like me... and had reminded  
me of what my own child would've been like.

Except he would've been half cast.

And my father had held a gun to my boyfriend's head, yelling.

"Never come back."

Now I was never coming back... and I was taking their precious little baby with me. Away from them.

Into the storm.

I took two last steps, before I was near the very gusts and wood and decapitated cows and sheep.

In a second the two of us were yanked into the tornado.

Gone.

## **YOU HAVE A MESSAGE**

I had a voice recorder that I kept in my room.

I would record in it everyday until I noticed something strange. There was always one recording dated from the next day.

I listened to one, one time, to see if it was a glitch... when I heard my voice say.

*"Mary, this is not a glitch. This machine can go a day ahead for some reason. Don't take that bus today... you'll fall asleep and wake up out of county."*

I heeded the warning and decided to use this small advantage of a day's notice to my benefit.

I brought the recorder with me everywhere but I could only ever get one message at a time from the next day.

*"Mary, the cat vomits up on the rug today at 4:50. Put him outside."*

*"Mary, your sister will call to cancel your lunch. Don't feel bad."*

*"Mary, there's a dress down on Maiden Street.  
It's the only one left! Get IT!"*

I liked these pre-reminders. It felt good knowing I had my own back. I didn't know how this time paradox was happening, but it was, and I was loving it.

Until I got a message which shook me up.

*"Mary, don't sleep with Tom tonight. I took the test. I'm positive for a baby."*

I was shocked. Tom was my boyfriend. We had been together for five years... but I didn't want to destroy a life that could possibly happen.

I was forty-six... and I thought I was too old to conceive.

I ignored the message. I wanted a child.

I checked the test the next day, and indeed I was positive. I didn't tell Tom. I was overjoyed though. I knew it was selfish... but this was meant to happen... I was just letting fate take its course.

I got a very distressed message on my recorder that day. An angry woman yelling at me.

*"Mary! I told you not to sleep with him! The message from tomorrow told me we're in hospital! Don't tell Tom! LEAVE HIM!"*

I was startled at the message. Frightened.

I loved Tom. I had to tell him if I was going to be in hospital soon. I told him that night of the pregnancy and he looked so angry, so furious at the new possibility of a child.

He left the house without a word.

I was heartbroken and I recorded a message into the machine, telling my past self.

*"Mary, don't sleep with Tom tonight. I took the test. I'm positive for a baby."*

The next day I was still pregnant and I cried. The message wouldn't let me record more than a few words so I couldn't tell myself more.

I got the message from tomorrow as it said.

*"Mary! Tom stabs us! I'm bleeding out in the hospital!"*

I shook horrified. I had to warn my past self. The embryo's life all I was concerned for. I said into the recorder for yesterday's me.

*"Mary! I told you not to sleep with him! The me from tomorrow told me we're in hospital! Don't tell Tom! LEAVE HIM!"*

I froze as I realized... I had made these messages happen... I was the one that had broke the Time Paradox and made a new one.

I suddenly felt a stab in the side of my stomach.

As I lay there in hospital the next day, I was in tears. I had lost the baby. I left that warning message that day in hopes that this future never comes to pass. But still, maybe there was a chance I could still be saved.

I listened to tomorrow's message desperately as my consciousness started to fade, in hopes for a better tomorrow. I only heard a different voice say, excited.

*"Wow! This will be great for winning the lottery!  
Thanks, dead lady!"*

## **KILLING THE SLEEP**

I lay awake in my bed. My eyes were cracking.

Every night I lay in this bed, smiling from ear to ear at my great escape.

Yes I had done it... I had conquered it.

I had finally taken control.

I didn't need the sleep. I didn't need the weakness of sleep to be my foil. I was strong, I was the real deal.

I tried to move slightly in my bed, but I felt the straps were tight. I giggled at this.

"Really? You don't think I can get out?! SHUT UP!"

I yelled at the closet door that was being pounded from the inside.

I heard the woman say to me with worry.

"There's no one there."

"Don't lie to me!" I screamed at her and she took a few steps back as I jerked forward trying to bite her. "You took him away! And now I'm free! You mustn't let him out! He isn't me!"

"What should we do?" she asked the man in shadows beside her. He looked at me in the distance, examining my burning eyes and said one more time.

"Electric shocks."

"Yes! Kill me! Kill me and I win! Kill me and I can finally kill the sleep!" I shrieked in a howling laugh. Oh! I found it all so funny... all so stupid.

Again I heard the pounding and I screamed at the wardrobe.

"DIE AND GO TO HELL!"

"Help me!" I screamed then at the doctor, begging him for the drugs that made me stronger from the sleep. "Help me kill the sleep so he can never return!"

"We have to put on the morphine mask again if he doesn't sleep soon..." the doctor said sadly. I had been in his care for six months.

They had taken me away from the other patients as all I ever did was stab and kill.

STAB AND KILL! STAB AND KILL!

"STOP HIM!" I had heard the man yell before I locked him in the closet where he was forever banging on the door. "He's an imposter! He's not me!"

"STAB AND KILL!" I had said to the man and brought the knife to him. But the doctors had grabbed and tied me to this chair.

"Please!" the man yelled in agony at his prison behind the wood. I hated his banging so much.

"Please!" I spat back laughing, "Please let me out! Oh you are so pathetic! ROT IN *HELL!*"

I struggled with my head, tossing it back and forth as the doctors put the conductors to my temples and I yelled. "KILL THE SLEEP! LET ME SURVIVE! I HAD TO! I HAD TO!"

There was sounds of bolts jolting through my body as I cackled in laughter.

The man remained silent as I had nearly killed him now.

Sanity gave up and just listened to my torture.

My pleasure... my victory... over Sanity once  
more

I was in Sanity now... I was INSANITY.

## **THIS LITTLE LIGHT OF MINE**

We all had a light within us. That flame that never went out. It was truly beautiful. It shined from our hearts and lit up all the surrounding areas.

It was the light of hope.

I felt mine glow bright everyday, my family's, my friends'. The world was safe and vibrant and alive with life, generosity and love.

Until there was a death.

No one knew how he had died... just that his heart had stopped glowing.

Because he had been killed.

We broke into fights, accusing one another. Many cried, many fought for justice.

*"He did it!"* one cried, pointing her finger at a friend. *"You always hated him!"*

*"I loved him like a brother!"* He responded. *"It is you that wanted him gone!"*

There were tears and shouts, the two splitting up the world. One side wanting justice for the other.

I stood amongst the crowds as they fought. Their lights dimmed a little but they never noticed. Some people hid in their homes.

Some hid in the caves.

Soon the world grew darker.

*"I never stole that from you!"* the woman shouted at the man at the shop. We had moved further in time, and society had evolved.

*"Yes you did! And you must pay your family's price."*

I tried to protect them, many did... but they were forced to serve the punishment... and soon they disappeared into the darkness.

Their lights going out.

That's when people grew really scared. There was actually an abyss of blackness... no light.

We started making artificial light which we used even in the day. Night had not existed. But the

giant light of hope in the sky grew dismayed when he saw us seek false hope instead of true.

He would leave us in the darkness of night... he couldn't stay where hope dimmed when he blinked his eyes.

I was afraid to close my eyes. I didn't want to experience the blackness that now came when I did.

Many people grew wary and thought the darkness was a blessing. They willingly closed their lids and woke no more. They vanished into the abyss.

People started to learn how to control their own light. They built metal cages around their hearts and only opened them to let light out when they saw only what pleased them.

Many became afraid that nothing ever would... that there was no more good.

They closed their lights for good and only used lamps in the night. Street lights.

The light in the sky grew dim... he was giving up hope for us.

Some of us said we couldn't even feel him anymore... that he was just the sun and nothing more.

Soon he disappeared.

All was darkness... besides my light.

I was terrified in the dark... hearing whispers of my former friends.

There was crawling in the darkness, cries and weeps.

I sat down and cradled myself back and forth whispering.

"I have hope, I h-have hope..."

The darkness in my heart started to grow... until I could see no more and I whispered in tears.

"I-I have... hope..."

## **THE ANGEL**

I thought it was odd how only I could see her.

She was glowing white. Her wings were glistening in the light, full of golden white feathers that spread far away from behind her back. She had long white hair and beautiful white eyes, her skin translucent almost in how clear it was, how perfect.

An angel.

I stuttered for words, as she stood in the middle of the highway. I hurried out of my car, trying to approach her, but was overpowered by her very presence. I fell on my knees to the cement ground, in complete awe and fear of her greatness.

"What... a-are... y-you?" I stuttered out, terror of her mighty presence and the pure power of God I felt coming off of her proximity.

"I'm so sorry..." she only whispered to me.

I looked at her confused, not sure by what she meant. I saw another man tremble before her might, as he stumbled before her and bowed down before her beauty.

When I saw him dare to peek a gaze up again, I saw he had an ominous slight white glow around him. That he too, was shining in the night.

I looked down to my own hands to see that I had the same white glow on me as well... that I was glowing, and my eyes widened horrified at what I witnessed.

"It's time for you to go..." she said.

We both looked back up at her. I was confused by what she meant, but I would go anywhere with this beautiful maiden. But as I tried to move towards her I felt my body wasn't permitted to come close.

I stiffened confused, and just saw in the distance, police cars driving toward us, in panic, cars parking on the highway near us. I lowered my eyebrows close to my eyes. Wary, confused.

I turned my head around to look behind me and saw my car was smashed into a blue one, my mangled body just laying in blood on the bonnet.

"I'm dead!" I screamed in tears, running towards my lifeless corpse. I realised then that I could feel nothing... not even my feet touching the ground as I ran.

"It's time to go..." The angel said once more, and I turned back to her. I nodded my head quickly and took a few steps towards her but my soul was forced to stop when she looked away from me and instead raised her open hand to the other man.

He trembled as he got up and took it, and in a flash of white light, the two were gone.

I paused. I didn't understand.

I suddenly heard whispers from around me.  
Hissing sounds.

It wasn't the crowd who had gathered around the crash site. I couldn't seem to be able to catch any of their words and cries of horror.

No, instead I saw shadows crawl up from the ground and voices hiss and curse in my ears.

Till I saw another angel stand before me. One with black shadowy wings and piercing black cold eyes.

"Time to go." He said with a grin.



## **SKIN DEEP**

I had been talking to him online for years.

We met on a forum for lonely souls.

He understood me... and I can't say most people did.

He was on the other side of the world.

I was afraid to ever show a picture of myself... believing I was ugly.

He was the same.

I didn't feel I was ever going to be good enough for him physically... I always refused to skype. He was the same.

We didn't talk about age... we didn't talk about income... all we talked about was ourselves.

Our real selves.

*"I know I understand you."* I said to him one day in a message... the fifth year of our relationship going by. *"I know you are the one for me."*

*"You wouldn't say that if you saw me."* he replied back, and I could feel the pain in his words.

I was turning thirty five soon. One day I would want to step out of the shadows and be seen. But by the only one who could see me from behind this face I was trapped with.

Him.

*"Do you believe beauty is skin deep?"* I asked him one day and he replied on the chat.

*"No... do you?"*

*"I..."* I didn't know how to continue. Tell the truth... I was just as bad as the other people in my life. I judged the book by the cover. I was just too afraid to admit it myself.

*"No."*

*"Hally... I'm dying."*

I froze up when I saw him type that. I felt myself go cold, an emptiness of despair running through my veins to my heart.

*"Of what...?"*

*"You don't want to know..."*

*"I love you..."* I typed back... but the words seemed so meaningless on a screen. I said out

loud by myself in my empty apartment, "I love him"

"*Please don't die.*" I said to him, my fingers typing the words so fast as tears reached my eyes.  
"*I'm not ready for you to die.*"

"*Would it mean anything? We know nothing about each other in real life.*"

Tears rushed down my cheeks as I typed, afraid, the reflection of my third degree burned face showing from my mirror away.

"*Meet me... and tell me I'm beautiful.*"

We arranged a date.

I didn't like stepping out in public... I was ugly. Since that fire scarring my face at the age of twelve... no one would look at me... that's why I knew I was not beautiful.

But maybe he would see me... me and not the skin... me and not the deformed duckling that never got to spread its swan wings.

I said I'd meet him at the airport, he agreed to travel across international borders.

I waited on a seat at the airport arrival station... and then I saw him approach.

He was a frail elderly old man... his skin wrinkled and his eyes full of tears.

"You're beautiful..." he said to me.

I smiled and replied, "T-that's all I w-wanted to hear."

He sat down next to me...took my hand... and we remained silent... until the stars appeared in the sky.



## **AWAY FROM THE CROWD**

I couldn't understand why everyone had been acting so strange around me lately. I was a bit nervous because of it, to arrive at the house of the party.

I entered into the doors and saw my schoolmates talking around the house. They laughed and giggled as I passed them, and I felt the atmosphere was a happy cheery one.

I saw my best friend James standing away at the corner of the room. He was wearing a scary monster mask. He had always been quirky like that. Everyone else at the teen costume party were dressed in more tame wear. Wanting to be seen as cool and sexy instead of scary.

"Hey, James." I said to him with a sad smile, feeling ignored from everyone else.

"Hey..." he said back, just as quiet. His voice sounded like it was pained... he had been struggling lately with our peers at school, and I wondered why he had came.

"You look cool." I said to him, with barely a whiff of a smile and he nodded his head back at me.

"Need to look scary today... I feel scary."

I nodded back in return, and he tilted his head at me, as if questioning something and asked.

"How'd you know it was me?"

"Because you always stand out from the crowd."

"That's what I hate." James said sourly. He stood still for a couple of minutes before turning his head towards the direction of the rowdy crowd and uttered. "Everyone thinks they are so superior."

"They must be doing something right... if they are fitting in."

"We're all told to be ourselves..." James whispered in hate of it all, "That other's will accept you. But instead you just get beat to a pulp by the very people that are meant to be your friends."

He was talking about the incident that had happened a couple of days ago to him. Some of the guys at this very party had followed him home, and

others cheered as he lay there quivering on the ground.

"I'm sorry, man." I said to him, in sympathy. I felt his pain, but I had never gotten his unwarranted punishment and he just chuffed.

He pulled me closer and pointed down to his hand that was going into his pocket. I watched, the crowds around us chatting and laughing, as he showed me a silver gun and I swallowed at the sight.

"Where'd you get that?" I asked him, quietly. He was only silent and I saw him lower his gun hand slowly to his side.

"Go home, David." he said to me.

X

I snapped out of it when I saw the teenagers from the house slowly fade into the emptiness of the abandoned building. The party had been ten years ago, and I hadn't stepped into this house since that night.

The last thing to disappear from the empty chilling room was my friend James. All I saw was him taking off his mask, and a bloody smiling mouth, and his eyes staring back at me.

After that, I was alone in the building of the high school massacre.